

Course Map — PA 3350: Public Policy Process

Fall 2026 — Online, Asynchronous — Writing Intensive

Texas State University — Department of Political Science

Course Details

Course:	PA 3350.002 — Public Policy Process (CRN 17262)
Credit Hours:	3 hours Prerequisite: None
Term / Mode:	Fall 2026, full 16-week semester — Online, asynchronous
Deadlines:	Weekly work due Sundays, 11:59 p.m. Central Time; late work –10% per day (see syllabus)
Required Text:	B. Guy Peters & John A. Hoornbeek, <i>American Public Policy: Promise and Performance</i> , 13th ed. (CQ Press, 2025)
Instructor:	Dr. W. Scott Langford Office: Trauth Huffman Hall 355
Office Hours:	Tuesdays & Thursdays, 2:00–4:00 p.m. (in person or by video; Zoom link in Canvas), and by appointment Email: scottlangford@txstate.edu

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- CLO1:** Explain the major theories and models of the public policy process—agenda setting, formulation, legitimation, implementation, and evaluation.
- CLO2:** Analyze how public problems are defined and reach the policy agenda within institutional, political, and economic contexts.
- CLO3:** Identify and assess the policy instruments and budgetary tools used to address public problems.
- CLO4:** Evaluate policy implementation and outcomes using empirical evidence and established analytical criteria.
- CLO5:** Apply policy-process frameworks to substantive areas (economic, tax, health, education, energy/environment, social welfare).
- CLO6:** Communicate policy analysis clearly and professionally in writing, and strengthen that writing through feedback and revision.
- CLO7:** Uphold ethical standards and the responsible use of evidence—including disclosure and verification of any AI assistance.

The Writing Spine

The course is designed around writing. Each module pairs a Peters reading with a short **Brief Essay** on which the instructor returns individualized written comments. That feedback carries forward into the capstone **Policy Memo**, developed on the public policy issue each student selects in Module 1 and completed through a **proposal** → **draft (feedback)** → **revised final** cycle. Weekly **Discussions** and short **Quizzes** reinforce the readings; a cumulative **Final Exam** confirms command of the framework and substantive areas.

Assessment

Component	Weight
Discussions	10%
Brief Essays (7)	30%
Quizzes (16)	10%
Policy Memo (Proposal, Draft & Revised Final)	20%
Final Exam (cumulative, take-home)	30%
Total	100%

Module Map (8 Modules over 16 Weeks)

Wk	Dates	Module / Topic	Peters	Supp. Readings (News · Agency · Academic)	Writing Due (Sun)
1	Aug 19–24	M1: Identifying a Public Policy Issue	—	Pew '24 · Surgeon Gen. loneliness · Stone '89	Syllabus Ack.; Intro Discussion; Quiz 1
2	Aug 25–31	M1 (cont.): Framing the Issue	—		Brief Essay 1; Quiz 2
3	Sep 1–7	M2: Structure of Policymaking (<i>Labor Day Sep 7</i>)	Ch 1–2	Kamarck (Brookings) · CRS Sep. of Powers · Federalist 51	Discussion 2; Policy Memo Proposal; Quiz 3
4	Sep 8–14	M2 (cont.): The Policymaking System	Ch 1–2		Brief Essay 2; Quiz 4
5	Sep 15–21	M3: Policy Choices & Agenda Setting	Ch 3–4	Pew '25 · OMB Circular A-4 · Baumgartner PET	Discussion 3; Quiz 5
6	Sep 22–28	M3 (cont.): Agenda Setting in Practice	Ch 3–4		Brief Essay 3; Quiz 6
7	Sep 29–Oct 5	M4: Legitimation & Implementation	Ch 5–6	Route Fifty (Chevron) · GAO High-Risk · Matland '95	Quiz 7
8	Oct 6–12	M4 (cont.): Implementation Dynamics (<i>Fall Break Oct 8–9</i>)	Ch 5–6		Brief Essay 4; Quiz 8
9	Oct 13–19	M5: Budgeting & Evaluation	Ch 7–8	Pew (debt) · GAO eval. terms · Campbell '69	Discussion 4; Quiz 9
10	Oct 20–26	M5 (cont.): Evaluation & Feedback (<i>Auto-W Oct 22</i>)	Ch 7–8		Brief Essay 5; Quiz 10
11	Oct 27–Nov 2	M6: Substantive Areas I (<i>choose two</i>)	Ch 9–12	KFF Medicaid · CBO Soc. Sec. · Hoynes–Patel (EITC)	Policy Memo Draft; Quiz 11
12	Nov 3–9	M6 (cont.): Domain Analysis	Ch 9–12		Brief Essay 6; Quiz 12
13	Nov 10–16	M7: Substantive Areas II (<i>choose two</i>)	Ch 13–16	TX Tribune (HB 2) · EIA AEO '25 · Levitt '04	Discussion 5; Quiz 13
14	Nov 17–23	M7 (cont.): Domain Analysis	Ch 13–16		Brief Essay 7; Quiz 14
15	Nov 24–30	M8: Policy Memo & Review (<i>Thanksgiving Nov 25–29</i>)	Review	—	Independent revision; Quiz 15
16	Dec 1–2	M8 (cont.): Exam Review (<i>Dec 2 last class; Reading Day Dec 3</i>)	Review	—	Final materials prep; Quiz 16

Final Exam Period (Dec 3–10): Final (revised) Policy Memo due Sat Dec 6; take-home Final Exam due Thu Dec 10 (both 11:59 p.m. CT)

“Peters” = chapter(s) in the required text, Peters & Hoornbeek, American Public Policy: Promise and Performance (13th ed., 2025). “Supp. Readings” names each module’s News · Agency · Academic trio; full citations and verified links are in the Supplemental Module Readings handout. Substantive-area modules use a “choose two chapters” structure. Dates reflect the official Texas State Fall 2026 (Full Term) academic calendar.